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CNS0401--Sailor teams up with his RDC to lead recruits

Ten years later

By JOC Rhonda Burke, Naval Training Center Great Lakes Public Affairs Office--When Aviation Structural Mechanic First Class (Air Warfare/Navy Air Crew) Jeff Becker graduated from boot camp in Orlando, Fla., in 1990, he set a goal to return to boot camp as a Recruit Division Commander (RDC). The catalyst for setting such a lofty goal was inspired by his RDC, then Fire Controlman First Class Stephen Adams. Today, Becker is leading a company of recruits with Chief Adams as his partner.

"I knew he would do well in the Navy," Adams said of his former recruit chief petty officer (RCPO). "I've had the opportunity to work with many of my former recruits out in the fleet but this is the first time I have worked with one as an equal."

Becker was in indoc at Recruit Division Commander School last October when he recognized Adam's voice from across the room.

"I couldn't believe it was him," said the 31-year-old Hatboro, Penn. native. "We started talking and right away we discussed doing a 'push' together."

Because Becker was ahead of Adams in RDC School, they weren't able to team up until recently. The pair is now leading Division 053 in ship 11, the USS Hooper at the Recruit Training Command. The division is in its sixth week of training.

Becker said he was inspired to take a tour of duty as a recruit division commander because of the way Chief Adams let him lead the division when he was the RCPO.

"I want to emulate Chief Adams as a leader," Becker said. "He taught me good leadership skills."

Chief Adams reported for his second tour as a Recruit Division Commander in 1999. He had previously "pushed" recruits at Recruit Training Command, Orlando, Fla., from 1989-1992.

"It is the best job I have had in the Navy," said Adams, 36, who has nearly 19-years in the Navy. "I enjoy the hands-on aspects of the job and the opportunity to train young people and teach them how to be a success in the Navy."

Since concluding his first tour as a Recruit Division Commander in 1992, Adams says he has worked with his former recruits at every command to which he has been assigned.

"Every time I see a former recruit I can't help but feel pride," Adams said. "That's when you know you've done your job correctly . . . they are the success story."

Adams says he enjoys being an RDC and believes one of the keys to success in the demanding job is being able to shift hats easily from the role of authoritarian to counselor to fit the situation.

"I try to develop the recruits to have respect for me but not to be afraid of me," Adams said. "Recruits need to know that they can trust their chain of command and how to utilize it."

Sometimes they have trouble doing that if they feel intimidated by their RDCs."

Adams says leading recruits is the best job in the Navy because you see the end result of your work.

"The day you put the recruits on the bus as Sailors headed for their "A" schools, you think back to what they were like the day they reported and you see the affect you have had on their lives," he said. "It's a great feeling."

During his career, Adams, who is originally from Boone, North Carolina, has trained nearly 1,000 recruits.

Becker is currently pushing his fourth division of recruits and says he would not rule out taking a return tour at Recruit Training Command somewhere down the road in his career.

"Our RCPO has already talked about coming back to push a division with me," Becker said.

The recruits in the division were told from the beginning that Adams had trained Becker.

"I think they really get a kick out of it," Adams said.

Adams will be commissioned May 1, 2001 as a chief warrant officer in the electronic program and is heading to the USS John C. Stennis.

CNS0402--Chief of Naval Personnel says manning up

By JOC Rhonda Burke Naval Training Center Great Lakes Public Affairs Office--The Navy's Chief of Personnel Vice Adm. Norbert R. Ryan says Navy leadership is intent "on walking the talk" when it comes to manning, retention and taking care of its people.

"There is a visible difference today in our manning levels at sea compared to two years ago," Ryan told Sailors during a recent visit to Naval Training Center, Great Lakes.

"In 1998, we had over 18,000 gapped billets at sea and were deploying battle groups at 91-93 percent manning levels. Today, the gap at sea has been reduced to 8,000 billets and the USS Truman battle group just deployed with 98 percent manning."

Ryan says the shortfalls have been reduced because Navy leadership has focused on the front line and how to retain Sailors and recruit the nation's best young people for service. The result is a Navy that offers increased quality of service for its Sailors.

As the Navy's Chief of Personnel, Ryan is responsible for critical issues such as recruiting, retention, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Programs, personnel distribution and overall manning of the Navy.

"We are in a war for talent, not a war for people," Ryan said. "If we can retain our top Sailors we won't need to recruit as heavily to man our fleet."

Ryan told enlisted Sailors there are four critical areas he is concentrating on to improve quality of life and quality of service for Sailors. They include:

- Sending the top Sailors to serve as Recruit Division Commanders and Recruiters and rewarding those who take on this challenging assignment.
- Getting rid of the draw-down mentality and raising standards for recruiting and retention
- Achieving a better balance between recruiting and retention.

Increasing spending on people including pay and benefits, reenlistment bonuses, advancing more Sailors and implementing the Thrift Savings program, which works like a 401K.

"Sometime during your career you need to be involved in the Sailorization process either as a recruiter, recruit division commander or instructor," Ryan told Sailors. "These are the most important shore duty jobs we have."

To support Sailors taking these challenging jobs, the Navy is implementing a \$5 million training program for recruiters and detailers.

"We are putting a lot of money into making sure recruiters are successful," he said. He also said there would continue to be great support for the Bluejackets HARP Program, which enables junior Sailors to return home for two weeks to work with local

recruiters. Ryan says more than 800 Sailors a month are participating in the program with great results.

Ryan is also working to continue improving sea duty pay for Sailors.

Getting rid of the drawdown mentality is important for the future of the fleet, Ryan says because the Navy needs to retain more of its second and third term Sailors and move them into positions of leadership in the fleet.

"Each individual is important," Ryan said. "We need to get the fleet focused on what we are focused on and that leadership and mentoring matter."

Ryan believes every leader should be evaluated on their skills of mentoring and taking care of people.

"Retention was up 2 percent last year," Ryan said. "That is a huge difference in the number of Sailors staying Navy." The number is particularly important because in 1999, the Navy experienced its lowest retention rate in a decade.

"From 1990-1999 we didn't bring enough people into the Navy to meet today's mid-level management needs," Ryan said. That sobering fact means the Navy now has to work harder to retain a greater percentage of first and second term Sailors than in the past.

"The two top reasons why Sailors leave the Navy are pay and advancement opportunity," Ryan said. "We have lobbied Congress

to increase pay and we have seen advancement percentages raise from 19 to 26 percent over last year," he said.

Ryan says the Navy is making a commitment to Sailors by increasing reenlistment bonuses to help retain Sailors with critical skills.

"We have budgeted \$150 million for SRBs this year and it will increase to \$167 million next year," the admiral said.

Additionally, the Navy has restored retirement packages, increased basic allowance for housing levels and is increasing medical benefits for active duty and retirees. The 401K type Thrift Savings Plan is due to go on-line next January, which will enable Sailors to save up to \$10,500 per year in a tax-free retirement plan.

"People are our number one priority," Ryan said. "Our nation can't take the all-volunteer force for granted and Navy leadership will continue to bring that message to Congress."

During his two-day visit, Ryan visited Recruit Training Command including seeing several Battle Station scenarios, got a briefing of the electronic classroom at Service School Command and visited several MWR facilities including the new climbing wall.

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CNS0403--Culinary class Sailors stand behind their work
Story by Tom Stephan, Editor, The Foc'sle Naval Station
Ingleside, Texas--Succulent lobster, grilled tuna steak, pan-seared fresh snapper, and calamari were on the menu recently at a Food Preparation II course held at Del Mar College's West Campus, located in Corpus Christi, Texas. Even more unusual than such extravagant food in a classroom were the students -- mess specialists from Naval Station Ingleside and Naval Air Station Corpus Christi.

Working under a homeport training initiative and the Local Training Authority (LTA) programs, these Sailors had the opportunity to learn the art and craft of cooking incredible meals while learning everyday food preparation techniques.

The students learned not only to prepare food from scratch, they reviewed hygiene and presentation styles that make food visually interesting, and more.

MS3 Manuel Nunez, of Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15 (HM-15), enjoys his improved knowledge of presentation. "Cooking aboard ship doesn't usually stress the idea of making food more visually appealing. When you can make a meal nutritious, flavorful, and beautiful under sanitary conditions, it makes for a great eating experience," he said.

"I've absorbed a lot of good information here," said MSSA Tony Maratea, of USS Cormorant (MHC 57). "I'd say 10 times more than what I picked up in 'A' School. Now I know how to make a

bouillabaisse, how to filet a fresh fish, and more -- and I can use that knowledge forever."

The skills learned in this class extend far beyond military galleys. "There are some tricks of the trade and a lot of knowledge that you can use in or out of the Navy," said MS3 Marcelo Torres, of HM 15.

As beneficial and enjoyable as the experience is for the students, the enthusiasm is mirrored by their teacher, Culinary Arts Instructor Mark Carpenter. "There is a definite difference between these Sailors and civilian students," said Carpenter, a chef with professional experience throughout the Coastal Bend. "These guys are dedicated, extremely attentive, read the books and follow the lessons through. Because of their enthusiasm, I'm having fun and teaching at the same time."

Carpenter was tapped by Local Training Authority (LTA) Supervisor Bruce Krahenbuhl, of Mine Warfare Training Center (MWTC) at Naval Station Ingleside. Krahenbuhl is responsible for finding classes in the area that meet the stringent Navy requirements.

"We are lucky to have Mark as a teacher," said Krahenbuhl. Carpenter was required to submit lesson plans and review much of the sanitation and preparation guidelines of the Navy before he could begin teaching the class.

Courses such as this one are part of a relatively new homeport training initiative designed to cut costs and maximize

education partnerships within the area. Other courses Krahenbuhl has spearheaded include an outboard motor class and a barber school, which have saved Navy and local commands thousands of dollars.

Krahenbuhl's comments about the effectiveness of local training are echoed strongly by MSC(SW) Scott Slivka, coordinator of the Mobile Training Team through MWTC. "With local training, we eliminate the need to ship Sailors halfway across the country to attend classes at Navy training centers. We reduce or eliminate the cost of transportation, per diem expense, and housing along with bringing money to the local economy," he said.

Slivka also emphasized the most important benefit of all. "The bottom line is not money. It's quality training and morale, plus keeping people close to their families. What is paramount here is that these Sailors get to go home at the end of the night. That's the real value of a program such as this."

The students of the Food Preparation II Class graduated Dec. 22. Bravo Zulu to Mess Management Specialist (MS) Seaman Ian Macotella, MS3 Bobby Anders, MS3 Gilbert Blanco, MS3 Marcelo Torres, MS3 Manuel Nunez and MS2 David Spencer of HM-15. MS3 James Harbison and MS3 (SW) Twyman, of USS Warrior (MCM 10), MS2 Geovani Wardlaw, of USS Devastator (MCM 6), Seaman (SN) Tony Maratea, of USS Cormorant (MHC 57), MS2 Mauricio Sanchez, of USS Gladiator (MCM 11), MS3 Steven Cook, of USS Defender (MCM 2), SN

Daniel Stone, of USS Scout (MCM 8) and MSSN Mark Langsam, of USS Avenger (MCM 1).

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CNS0404--Fleet Training Center, Norfolk Instructor "Gets Into"

His Hobby

By Carolyn W. Anderson, Fleet Training Center Public Affairs--

Health experts in the world today all suggest strongly that we should eat properly, get enough rest and take part in a hobby that will bring you happiness and relief from stress. Some of us "get into" our hobbies more than others. Some take up gardening, some do wood working and then, there are some who really "get into" their hobbies. Fleet Training Center, Norfolk's (FTC NorVa) OCS(SW) Todd Hockensmith literally "gets into" the uniform of an average Union Army soldier whenever he can. He is among the history buffs that have taken to the hobby of being a Civil War Re-enactor. During the workday, Hockensmith is an Instructor. He is assigned to Anti-submarine Warfare Training Department of Fleet Training Center, Norfolk, which is commanded by Captain Fred S. Bertsch III. He is the Assistant Course Coordinator and Instructor for the Anti-submarine Warfare Evaluator Common Core Course on Instruction. He trains junior surface warfare officers and senior enlisted personnel assigned to ASW platforms to function as ASW Evaluators during all phases of the ASW problem.

In his "other life", after hours, Hockensmith is a member of the 79th New York Volunteers, Company A, Cameron Highlanders. They are involved with their hobby to the point of what some might consider "extreme". He, and others who engage in this

form of hobby, pitch their tents and sleep in similar circumstances just as the Infantry did in years gone by. This includes dealing with dramatic changes in weather and temperatures.

They take very seriously the uniforms and the equipage that each is allowed to wear and bring to each event. All costs for travel, equipment and uniforms are assumed by each member. The most commonly seen uniforms of the American Civil War are those that have been adopted as the standard of the company. This enables them to present to the general public a historically accurate picture of the average Union Army soldier.

Hockensmith's Company "A" Re-enactors participate in events that are held at many of the historical sites that Virginia is heavily endowed with. Last September they held a weekend event up in Chancellorsville, Va. in which the members tried to bring as much as they could carry in a knapsack as they tried for the first ever United States Volunteer campaign battalion. The instructions they were each given read as follows: "Bring what you want to carry for food and drink and plenty of rounds and musket caps. Make sure you bring some form of deet with you as the ticks and 'skeeters' might be bad. Most of us are paired up with a 'pard,' so cooking equipment and tentage can be split up. Pray for good weather". They gathered to re-enact the battle that was originally the Chancellorsville Campaign that occurred from April 30 to May 6, 1863. At that time, the principal

commanders were Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker (Union Army) and Gen. Robert E. Lee and Maj. Gen. Thomas J. Jackson (Confederate Army). During the original campaign, a total of 154,734 forces engaged. The Union forces totaled 97,382 and the Confederate had 57,352. The estimated casualties were 24,000. The Union suffered losses of 14,000 and the Confederate lost 10,000. This is the battle where "Stonewall" Jackson was mortally wounded. Many historians cite this battle to be Lee's greatest victory.

Re-enacting has several aspects. The first and foremost is that it is done to honor the sacrifices and bravery of the men who participated in the American Civil War. It is for the memory of the over 600,000 Americans who gave their lives to the causes they believed in, whether North or South. It is also a vehicle for providing a living display of what the soldier looked like, how they lived, ate and slept, and how they fought the battles. This is accomplished through living histories at several locations and schoolhouses around Hampton Roads. It is also accomplished through battle re-enactments all over the country.

A Living History is where various re-enactors set up a camp similar to what would have been set up by soldiers of the period. They display the weapons, uniforms, eating utensils, tents, soldier's gear and even food of the period. This enables the visiting public real-life experience to see, touch and feel the items. The Re-enactors spend a lot of time talking with the

visitors, answering questions and discussing various aspects of the period. They also visit schools, from elementary on up to college, where they are essentially able to bring to them a museum display brought to life.

When asked why he is involved in Re-enacting, Hockensmith said "I have always been interested in Civil War period. While growing up in Central Pennsylvania, I visited Gettysburg many times. I continued reading as I grew up. I know of at least 54 of my ancestors that fought during the war, both with the Union and the Confederacy. I have researched their Units and the battles they participated in and searched for where they are buried".

Hockensmith has found that learning the legacy and researching it to be a fascinating past time. He feels the need to pass on to others the knowledge that he has gained so that the stories are not lost to time. After one of his elementary school presentations, a young student came up to him and commented that he, himself, did not know much about the Civil War but that he was now going to go to the Library to get a book on it.

This one child's comment is a vital part of why Chief Hockensmith continues on his quest to reach out to the public, educate them and encourage them in the love of history. He says "It's easy to forget, 130 to 140 years later, the sacrifices our ancestor's made to give us the country we enjoy today. I want,

if for just a few minutes, to help people realize that those men gave us a big gift and to reflect on what it means."

If you are interested in how you may join in or you want to hear more about this historic hobby you may contact Senior Chief Todd Hockensmith at email: ny79th@yahoo.com

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CNS0405--NAMTRAGRUDET Point Mugu Highlights

By: Lt. Tena Byrd NAMTRAGRUDET Point Mugu Public Affairs Office-
-Since its establishment in October 2000, Naval Air Training
Group Detachment (NAMTRAGRUDET) Point Mugu has certified two new
Master Training Specialist's (MTS). Aviation Machinist's Mate
First Class (Air Warfare) Steven Drenning and Aviation
Electronics Technician First Class Robert Armer have
successfully completed the MTS qualification requirements.

Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class Robert D'Emanuele,
Aviation Electronics Technician First Class Howard Slaughter and
Information Systems Technician Steiner were selected for
advancement to their present grade after the September E-4 - E-6
Exam results.

NAMTRAGRUDET Point Mugu has become an active participant in
local community relations. In early December, they hosted their
first tour group of third through sixth grade students. The
children enjoyed seeing such displays as the operation of E-2/C-
2 hydraulic flight control, landing gear, and cargo ramp
trainers, Integrated Systems Maintenance Trainer (ISMT) Power
Plant trainers, and electronic classrooms. Following the tour,
many children stayed behind to gain the autographs of their
staff tour guides. In January, they hosted their second tour for
the Regional Defense Partnership.

The Officer-in-Charge Lt. Cmdr. Robert L. Warren and Public
Affairs Officer Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class Robert

D'Emanuele received certificates of appreciation from Capt. Rainwater, commanding officer, Naval Bases Ventura County, at a recent reception.

Aviation Electronics Technician First Class Robert Armer was selected Instructor Of The Year and Aviation Structural Mechanic First Class Brent Anderson was selected as the 2000 Sailor of the Year for NAMTRAGRUDET Point Mugu.

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CNS0406--Aging vets sail 5,000 miles to the awe of today's
Sailor

By: JO2 Eileen Kelly, Naval Hospital Pensacola Florida Public
Affairs Office--Early Wednesday morning (January 10), Yeoman
Second Class (YN2) Jenice Vitale is keyed-up. She and a handful
of Naval Hospital Pensacola Sailors are going to travel 60 miles
to see Navy history live.

Landing Ship Tanker (LST) 325, and its 29 aging World War
II and Korea veterans that have traversed more than 5,000
nautical miles across the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, are
steaming up Mobile, Ala., Bay.

YN2 Vitale, who works for the hospital's Command Master
Chief, has been tracking the LST story for weeks. Those who work
around her say she's about to drive them crazy talking about the
event. "I'm very excited about getting the opportunity to go,"
says Vitale during the hour drive.

However from my perspective as a Navy journalist, I was
taking the morning to see a WWII ship and its crew. When I
arrived my outlook changed. There were a couple thousand people
to greet the vessel at one of the piers of the Alabama State
Docks in downtown Mobile. People were waving flags and holding
banners.

A row of "Old Glory" was standing tall compliments of the
Davidson High School NJROTC unit. Navy service members posted
Colors. Various veteran support units were in their finest

uniforms. Although the crowds had taken over the pier each flag stood proud above them. The excitement on the pier seemed filled with anticipation, wonders and pride.

Vitale and I separated from the main group to capture the historical event. The opportunity of talking with WWII Sailors suddenly peaks my curiosity.

My Mom's oldest brother, Joseph, died at age 18 in the 'Big War.' These Sailors have stories about places and times in which my Uncle Joe lived. It began to amaze me. I would pull up a chair and listen to stories until they could tell no more.

My career in the Navy spans five years, yet I've never seen a ship being moored pierside. I found some odd pride watching a "monkey's fist" being thrown ashore.

Humming along with "Anchors Aweigh" being played through loud speakers, I almost fell off the pier trying to photograph Sailors securing a mooring line to a bollard.

It was laughable searching my memory for Navy terminology. Soon enough, I was quizzing my bootcamp knowledge of ship parts, remembering chocks, gaff, hatch, bulkhead, and stanchions.

LST-325 was a rusty old ship, with a crew of similar vintage, completing a cruise. I hail the men from the 'Old Salty Dog' era. I listened to family members calling out to their Sailors, and thanking God for bringing them safely home. This was unlike anything I've ever experienced.

Retired Navy Officer John Chooljian, 75, was part of the original crew but was 'piped over the side' during the initial stage of the voyage from Greece because of a medical problem. The Carlstadt, NJ, Sailor explained that he couldn't make the voyage aboard LST Memorial Ship, as he called it, but was certain to be in Mobile for the arrival.

Vitale struck an immediate friendship with Chooljian after learning he was practically a neighbor. She's from Albany, NY, and the retired Navy officer is from New Jersey.

The heat of the Mediterranean summer turned days into months of exhausting work when "temperatures reached over 105 degrees, and the guys suffered from dehydration," said Chooljian. "The galley was closed for the first month or so. We'd have to walk into Souda Bay, for food and water and that was about a mile and a half hike. That alone made it tough for a lot of the fellow," he said.

Assigned as one of ship's amateur radio operators, Chooljian said he flew back to New York after laboring on the ship for a month and a half. He stayed in contact with the LST from his home through amateur radio.

Chooljian relayed ship communications to LST Association headquarters. "While the ship crossed the Atlantic I talked to the XO (Executive Officer), Jack Carter, through amateur radio," said Chooljian, "I may not have been on that ship but I did what I had to do to make sure she got here."

In the shoulder-to-shoulder crowd, about five feet from the brow, YN2 Vitale watched as family members met with their Sailors. There were hugs and kisses and tears. "I'm honored to be here," she said. "I can't believe how proud I am of these guys," she said. "Having that much dedication to succeed at something, let alone sail across the Atlantic ... that's amazing."

In comparison to all previous war veterans, I have no 'real' concept of fighting a war for my country. I don't know how to dodge a cannonball! I've never feared torpedoes. I've never been on a ship! The Navy provides me an opportunity of having a career in journalism ... with 30 vacation days. It's promoted me four times in two years. It affords me the opportunity to wear First Class chevrons this year.

The celebration is waning. It's time to return to Pensacola, and all I can think about is how 75-year-old Sailors revived a 58-year-old ship ... sailing it more than 5,400 nautical miles.

I can't even get my 10-year-old jeep to start.

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CNS0407--10 years later: Gulf War lessons play role in Navy training

By: JOC Rhonda Burke Naval Training Center Great Lakes Public Affairs Office--Ten years ago last month, the United States led a military coalition against Iraq, starting with an air campaign that launched the Gulf War the night of Jan. 16.

The lessons learned by the U.S.'s involvement in the Gulf War continue to take center stage in the training of Navy personnel for their respective roles in the defense of our nation.

For many Sailors it was their first opportunity to put the training they had received to use and to finally understand the lesson in the repetitiveness of shipboard training; for others it prompted them to join the Navy to defend freedom.

"Everything I had learned up to that point in my 12-years of the Navy came into play during that six-week period in the Gulf War," said Senior Chief Information Systems Technician (Surface Warfare) Rocky Held, an instructor at Navy Leadership Continuum School at Service School Command. "I understood what the hours of training were all about."

Held was a Chief Radioman onboard the USS Missouri (BB 63) during the Gulf War and was working in combat communications the night the firing commenced, waiting for the messages that would direct the crew to fire its missiles and later its 16-inch guns.

He says he uses the lessons of Desert Storm in his classroom every day. "This is what I teach-leadership," he said. "The curriculum calls for us to tell sea stories about our experiences and to help junior Sailors understand the importance of leadership and the importance of training."

Commander, Naval Training Center, Great Lakes Rear Adm. David P. Polatty was the deputy commander for Carrier Air Wing One onboard the USS America (CV 66). He led the first night strike of Desert Storm from the Red Sea to targets north of Baghdad, the deepest interdiction strike of the war.

"Training is extremely important. It is the reason we win or lose in combat," Polatty said. "Desert Storm taught us how vital it is to have the right force structure, which covers manning, equipment, spare parts and proper logistics."

Today those lessons are incorporated into the training all enlisted Sailors receiving in boot camp.

"During Battle Stations we stress the importance of teamwork, accountability and training, training, training for success in combat," Polatty said. The Battle Stations initiative is one way the Navy has incorporated the lessons of Desert Storm into recruit training.

Lt. Youssef Aboul-Enein was home for winter break from his studies at the University of Arkansas when a scud missile damaged his family's home in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

"It was that experience that eventually led me to join the Navy in 1994," he said. "The scud missile landed about 30 miles from my home and blew out the windows of the house."

Following the attack, Aboul-Enein joined the Red Crescent and worked to process Kuwaiti refugees in his homeland of Saudi Arabia. Following the war, he returned to his studies at the University of Arkansas and later chose to join the Navy as a medical intelligence officer.

"I really wanted to get a piece of Saddam," he said. In 1998, he participated in Operation Southern Watch while stationed aboard the USS Guam (LPH 9). "It was very gratifying." He also served as a military advisor during operation Bright Star.

"Lots of folks are calling for the lifting of sanctions and I disagree with that," Aboul-Enein said. In addition to his role as the Naval Hospital's medical intelligence officer, Aboul-Enein also serves as a Foreign Area Officer advising the U.S. military on cultural affairs of the Middle East.

Firing the first Tomahawk

Master Chief Cryptologic Technician (Submarines/Surface Warfare) Duffy Merrill, command master chief for Naval Training Center, was a senior chief onboard the USS Paul F. Foster (DD 964) in the Gulf. It was his second time in combat having

served in Southeast Asia in the late 1960s during a tour in the U.S. Army.

"There were only three people onboard our ship that had seen or been close to any combat prior to Desert Storm," Merrill said. "There was a chief in engineering, myself and the captain of the ship, Capt. Timothy Ahern. When the order came to fire our Tomahawk missiles, I talked to my division and let them know what to expect and told them to rely on their training."

The USS Foster was the first ship to fire a Tomahawk that night. Slated to be third in the firing order behind USS Bunker Hill (CG 52) and USS Wisconsin (BB 64), Foster was the first ship to successfully launch its missiles, due to malfunctions on the other ships.

"Team work is the most important thing we learned in Desert Storm," Merrill said. "We had a lot of reservists that we recalled and became a part of our crew. They were eager to learn and to be a part of the team and the crew worked well together."

Merrill said the other important lesson of combat is to "always take our training seriously."

"You don't know when you will be called out to take action and you have to be ready," he said. USS Foster was undergoing refresher training off the coast of San Diego when she was ordered to return to Long Beach to prepare for deployment to the Gulf.

"We deployed Dec. 8, 1990 and steamed for the Gulf," Merrill said. "When we were in the Gulf, we didn't know the threat we would face. Iraqi's defense forces were highly regarded, we had to be prepared for what might come."

Merrill said the most poignant moment of the War came that first night, as they were preparing to launch the Tomahawk missiles.

"I went up to my division and there was this one Sailor sitting off in the corner, thumbing through the pictures in his wallet. When I asked what was wrong, he said he wished he and his wife would have had kids before he deployed to the Gulf. War is War. It imposes a deep personal impression on you. Everyone reacts differently to the situation."

Merrill credits the leadership onboard Foster to the success of its crew.

"The leadership onboard that ship was great," he said. "Capt. Ahern was an inspiration to all of us he was always looking out for his Sailors and checking to make sure everyone was okay."

On the ground

Hospital Corpsman Second Class (Fleet Marine Force) Howard Dillon Jr., 42, of Fort Wayne, Ind, was with the Marine 2nd Low Altitude Air Defense (LAAD) in the Saudi Arabian desert during the Gulf War and went into Kuwait City on the day of the ground

war. "We saw lots of tank battles and we had 28 Iraqi Soldiers surrender to us," Dillon said of his experiences.

A former Soldier, the corpsman said he spent nearly three hours on the phone with his father, Howard Dillon Sr., just prior to deploying.

"My dad was in Vietnam and he had never really talked to me about his experiences until then. He reminded me that corpsman have a vital role to play in a unit. He told me to think about my responsibilities to them and their families and to remember that I might be the one to hear the last words of a friend."

Dillon says the experience taught him that he can do the job, if he has to.

"Being in a combat zone is a scary experience and it is a very eye-opening experience. Fortunately, no one in my unit was wounded or killed, but we had to expect the worse. Everyone is scared. You have to rely on your training."

Dillon is currently assigned to the Naval Hospital as the leading petty officer for the plans, operations and medical intelligence division.

First deployment

For Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Surface Warfare) Kevin Hogan, 30, of Worcester, Mass., the Gulf War was his first shipboard deployment as a second class petty officer.

"I had been in the Navy just over two years when my ship, USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58) was deployed for Operation Desert Shield," Hogan said.

The ship left Newport Roads on Aug. 15, 1990 and returned to its homeport March 28, 1991. During the Gulf War the ship was stationed in the Red Sea charged with enforcing the embargo.

"I was just a young kid amazed at everything," said Hogan, who kept a journal of his experiences. "The biggest thing I remember is not knowing what was happening. We did not have satellite television program onboard like they do today. We didn't know that CNN was broadcasting the air war live and other developments."

Hogan says he draws on his experiences continually when teaching students.

"I think the biggest lesson is the importance of damage control training and drills onboard ship," Hogan said. "I've been on ships where it isn't taken as seriously as it should be and I've always spoke out for more training. I took that away from my experiences onboard Roberts."

Hogan said the USS Roberts had struck a mine a couple of years earlier in the Persian Gulf and the memory of that incident weighed heavily on the crew.

"The whole Chain of Command was very damage control orientated," he said. "They taught us to be prepared for anything and you will make it."

Hogan says another vivid memory of the Persian Gulf War is the packages sent to Sailors by citizens in the United States.

"I was really impressed with the outpouring of care packages, just sent to anyone," he remarked. "It was a good experience and I'm prepare to go again if the need arises."

Preparing for casualties

Lt. Cmdr. Steve Patton, supply officer for Naval Hospital Great Lakes, was a lieutenant with the Second Medical Battalion, Camp LeJeune, N.C., during Desert Storm. He was in the Gulf area from November 1990 through June of 1991.

"We learned we could do what we had planned and trained for," he said of his experiences in the war. "We were set up and prepared to treat up to 3,000 casualties a day in the worse case scenario."

Patton was a company commander for a 200 person medical collecting and clearing company. The company had complete operating capabilities in the field and was staffed by surgeons, nurses and corpsman.

"I think the best way to prepare is to become comfortable each day in making decisions about your job. You have to be confident that you can perform the mission."

Manning the hospital ship

Cmdr. Maureen Zeller was a nurse onboard USNS Mercy during the Gulf War. The ship was on station from September 1990 through March 1991.

"You can never have too much training," Zeller said of her experience. "I learned a lot of things that I'm glad I never had to put to use."

Zeller said the crew of Mercy went through extensive training on chemical and biological warfare agents and how to treat such injuries.

"Mercy was told to expect up to 1,000 patients a day," she said. "Thankfully we never saw that but we were prepared."

Zeller says the lessons of Desert Storm that stay with her daily training.

"What we do in our jobs each day prepares us for these situations," she said. "We have to make sure Sailors are aware and mindful of the big picture and prepared to do their jobs."

Onboard USS Missouri (BB 63)

For Held the first night of hostilities was a long one.

"We were at General Quarters (GQ) from 2300 on the 15th to 1400 on the 16th," he said. "We had eight missiles fired at us and our chemical alarm went off during the attack. When you practice GQ you go for two or three hours, out there we were at GQ for two to three days. After about 18 hours you started seeing how people react and you can see fear and you start to

realize that things can happen and that the training you have had is keeping you going."

Held says a lot of his lessons in leadership school center around his experiences in the Gulf.

"People don't think things will happen to us, but this can happen and you will survive by being prepared and listening to what people tell you," he added.

As part of leadership school, Held teaches a Combat Crisis Leadership Unit.

"The personal stories bring home the lesson," he said.

"The experience of Desert Storm made the Navy more than a job to me, it gave it more meaning and helped to put it into perspective. We had it tough, but nothing like our predecessors in World War II. I can only imagine that."

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